

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /091 W

-----125619 061346Z /50

R 051534Z APR 78

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6556

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0773

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, AKB, BQG

SUBJECT: ABRASIMOV INTERVIEW: RUDOLF HESS AND SPANDAU PRISON

REF: BONN 5888

SUMMARY: ON 4 APRIL, ABRASIMOV REPEATED PUBLICLY SOVIET HARD LINE POSITION ON RELEASE OF HESS, AVOIDED QUESTION OF DISPOSITION OF HESS' REMAINS, AND INDICATED THERE IS SOME DOUBT ON DISPOSITION TO BE MADE OF SPANDAU PRISON AFTER HESS' DEATH. END SUMMARY

1. DURING THE 4 APRIL DISCUSSION OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE GDR ABRASIMOV WITH THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION IN WEST BERLIN, THE SUBJECT OF RUDOLF HESS AND SPANDAU PRISON WAS RAISED. IN REACTION TO A QUESTION ON THE RELEASE OF HESS, ABRASIMOV IS QUOTED IN 5 APRIL TAGESPIEGEL AS HAVING RESPONDED, "RELEASE OF THIS WAR CRIMINAL WOULD MEAN AMNESTY TOWARDS FASCISM AND FOR ALL THOSE WHO REPRESENTED IT AND FOLLOWED ITS INHUMAN DOCTRINE. WHAT REASONS WOULD SPEAK FOR EARLY DISMISSAL?

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BASED ON WHICH MERITS SHOULD HE BE RELEASED?" COMMENT: THIS REFLECTS THE SOVIET POSITION AS WE HAVE KNOWN IT. EVEN THOUGH SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE FRG FALIN HAS GIVEN THE IMPRESSION TO THE FRG (REFTEL) THAT THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE SOME FLEXIBILITY ON THIS MATTER, WE SUSPECT THAT FALIN IS ATTEMPTING TO GAIN WHATEVER CAPITAL HE CAN BE APPEARING TO BE FLEXIBLE AND NOT THAT HE IS INDI-

CATING A MOSCOW POSITION AT VARIANCE WITH THE POSITION THAT ABRASIMOV HAS ONCE AGAIN MADE KNOWN THIS TIME IN A PUBLIC FORUM. END COMMENT.

2. TAGESPIEGEL ALSO REPORTED THAT ABRASIMOV WAS ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE SPANDAU PRISON BUILDING. ABRASIMOV'S ANSWER WAS THAT THIS QUESTION WILL BE DECIDED AFTER THE DEATH OF HESS. COMMENT: AS DEPARTEMENT IS AWARE, THE ALLIED VIEW IS THAT THERE IS NO NEED TO REACH A DECISION ON THE POST-HESS STATUS OF THE BUILDING, WHICH WILL REVERT TO BRITISH CONTROL. END COMMENT.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT OFF THE RECORD, ABRASIMOV INDICATED THAT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE SOVIET POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE RELEASE OF HESS, WAS THAT HESS HAD NOT REPENTED HIS FASCIST IDEAS WHILE IN PRISON. COMMENT: THIS TOO HAS BEEN A CUSTOMARY REMARK OF THE SOVIETS AND IS SOMEWHAT ABSURD, UNLESS THE SOVIETS EXPECT HESS TO BECKON ONE OR ALL OF THE FOUR GOVERNORS OR THEIR SUPERIORS FOR A SPECIAL AUDIENCE IN ORDER TO CONFESS THAT HE HAS REPENTED HIS FASCIST IDEAS. THERE REALLY WOULD BE NO OTHER WAY FOR A REPENTANCE TO BE MADE, SINCE HESS IS (TECHNICALLY) NOT PERMITTED TO SPEAK TO OTHER PRISON ATTENDANTS AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD OBJECT TO HESS' DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT OF FASCISM WITH HIS VISITING RELATIVES. END COMMENT.

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4. WE ARE ALSO ADVISED THAT ABRASIMOV WAS ASKED WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HESS' BODY IN THE EVENT OF HIS DEATH AT SPANDAU. HIS OFF-THE-RECORD ANSWER WAS THAT THE DECISION WILL BE MADE AT THE TIME OF HESS' DEATH. COMMENT: ASSUMING THAT THIS REPORT IS ACCURATE, WHICH WE BELIEVE IT IS, ABRASIMOV IS EITHER SHOWING A RESPECT FOR THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF QUADRIPARTITE EXCHANGES (WHICH WE DOUBT) OR SHOWING RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT PUBLICLY THAT THE FOUR POWERS HAVE AGREED TO CREMATE HESS UPON HIS DEATH. END COMMENT. GEORGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POW, PRISONERS RELEASE, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978USBERL00773
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: UPGRADED PER MEMO P840097-1208
Executive Order: R3 19930716 AINSWORTH, THOMAS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840097-1243, D780148-1130
Format: TEL
From: USBERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780488/aaaacwvt.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: eba35cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BONN 5888
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3061051
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ABRASINOV INTERVIEW: RUDOLF HESS AND SPANDAU PRISON
TAGS: PGOV, UR, AKB, BQG, (HESS, RUDOLF), (ABRASIMOV)
To: STATE BERLIN
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/eba35cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014